

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus to facilitate use of the correct size wheel bearing comprising:
a mold comprising a top surface, a bottom surface, and a form region,
the form region comprising,
 a form bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface,
 an outer wall contiguous with the top surface and the form bottom
surface, the outer wall having a contoured surface and a generally cylindrical shape, and
 a hub disposed within the outer wall, the hub comprising
 a hub top surface substantially parallel to the top surface
and
 an inner wall contiguous with the hub top surface and the
form bottom surface and having a generally cylindrical shape.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the mold comprises a plastic material.
3. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the mold further comprises a removable cover
that attaches to the top surface of the mold.
4. The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein a protective material is placed between the top
surface of the mold and the removable cover.
5. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the top surface further comprises a rim around
the perimeter of the mold.
6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the top surface comprises a first marking
identifying a wheel bearing model number and a second marking identifying a type of vehicle in
which the wheel bearing is installed.

7. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the hub top surface comprises a marking for identifying the type of wheel bearing.

8. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the contours of the outer wall are designed to fit rollers of a wheel bearing.

9. A method for storing a wheel bearing using a wheel bearing mold to facilitate use of the appropriate-sized wheel bearing in a vehicle comprising:

placing a wheel bearing in a wheel bearing mold designed such that only one size of wheel bearing properly fits in the wheel bearing mold;

verifying that the correct size wheel bearing is placed in the wheel bearing mold; and

covering the wheel bearing mold to protect the wheel bearing and create a packaged wheel bearing.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of verifying the wheel bearing comprises checking that the wheel bearing serial number and vehicle model identifier on the wheel bearing mold correspond to the wheel bearing.

11. The method of Claim 9, wherein the packaged wheel bearing is shipped from a manufacturer of the wheel bearing to a purchaser.

12. The method of Claim 9, wherein the packaged wheel bearing is stored for later installation in a vehicle.

13. The method of Claim 9, wherein the packaged wheel bearing is stored in a rack comprising packaged wheel bearings of the same size.

14. The method of Claim 9, wherein grease is applied to the wheel bearing before placing it in the wheel bearing mold.

15. A method for installing the appropriate-size wheel bearing in a vehicle using a wheel bearing mold comprising:

selecting a rack holding wheel bearing molds containing wheel bearings for a vehicle;

removing a wheel bearing mold from the rack;

verifying the vehicle model number and the wheel bearing model number on the wheel bearing mold;

removing the wheel bearing from the wheel bearing mold; and
installing the wheel bearing.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the rack holds wheel bearing molds containing wheel bearings of the same size.

17. The method of Claim 15, wherein the wheel bearing is installed in the wheel assembly of an aircraft.

18. The method of Claim 15, wherein notches in the wheel bearing mold facilitate removal of the wheel bearing from the mold.

19. The method of Claim 15, wherein the wheel bearing mold is placed on an assembly line with a wheel assembly.

20. An apparatus to facilitate use of the correct size wheel bearing comprising:
a mold, the mold comprising a top surface, a bottom surface, and a form region,
wherein the dimensions of the form region are such that only one model of wheel bearing can
correctly fit in the form region,

the form region comprising,

a form bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface,

an outer wall contiguous with the top surface and the form bottom
surface, the outer wall having a contoured surface and a generally cylindrical shape, and

a hub disposed within the outer wall, the hub comprising

a hub top surface substantially parallel to the top surface

and

an inner wall contiguous with the hub top surface and the
form bottom surface and having a generally cylindrical shape.

21. The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein the hub top surface is level with a wheel
bearing top surface when a wheel bearing of the correct size is placed in the form region.

22. The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein a step is disposed between the top surface
and the form bottom surface and further disposed outside the outer wall, the step operable for
facilitating placement and removal of the wheel bearing in the form region, the step comprising

a step surface generally parallel to the top surface and contiguous with the outer
wall and

a step wall generally parallel to the outer wall and contiguous with the step
surface and the top surface.

23. An apparatus to facilitate use of the correct size wheel bearing comprising:
a mold sized to accept the correct size wheel bearing, the mold comprising a top
surface, a bottom surface, and a form region,
the form region comprising,
a form bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface,
an outer wall contiguous with the top surface and the form bottom
surface, the outer wall having a contoured surface and a generally cylindrical shape, the outer
wall comprising a first notch and a second notch operable for facilitating removal of the wheel
bearing from the form region, and

a hub disposed within the outer wall, the hub comprising
a hub top surface substantially parallel to the top surface
and
an inner wall contiguous with the hub top surface and the
form bottom surface and having a generally cylindrical shape.

24. The apparatus of Claim 23, wherein the inner wall comprises a third notch and a
forth notch operable for facilitating removal of the wheel bearing from the form region.

25. The apparatus of Claim 24, wherein the first notch, the second notch, the third
notch, and the fourth notch are contiguous with the form bottom surface so as to reduce the
existence of a vacuum between the surfaces of the wheel bearing and the mold.